

continually and I never criticized her because I sensed she had enough trouble and I was living with her younger sister, besides.

but one afternoon when we were visiting, the older sister said to me: "all right, I know you've had some novels published but I have these babies, these children, that's an art, that's my art!"

"many people have babies," I said, "that's really not exceptional, it's rather standard. but to write a good novel is a rare and an exceptional thing."

she leaped up and waved her arms: "oh yeah. oh yeah? what about your daughter? where is your daughter now?"

"Santa Monica, California."

"SANTA MONICA? WHAT THE HELL KIND OF FATHER ARE YOU?"

I no longer see either sister, although about 2 months ago the younger one phoned long distance and among other things she told me that her sister had just mailed her latest novel off to New York and that her sister thought it was very good, that it was the one, that is was the one that would do it.

I didn't tell her younger sister that all of us novelists think that and that is why there are so many of us.

THE BEACH BOYS

only the young are at the beach.
I have a good body for my age
little bull neck and chest
and powerful legs.
but my back is badly scarred
from a former malady.
I feel some shame for my deformities
and I would not be there
only my woman insists

and if she has the courage to be there
with me
then I must have the courage to go
with that.

but I wonder where the old and the crippled
and the ugly are?
shouldn't the beaches be theirs too?
where are the one-legged people?
the armless?

I watch the young boys on their surfboards
slim bodies gliding.

some of them will end in madhouses
some of them will gain 40 pounds
some of them will suicide.

most of them will stop coming to the
beach.

and there is the sun and there is the sand
and the young boys zoom down palisades of water
and the young girls watch them.

they are thoughtless and pleased.

I stretch out
turn on my stomach
and they are
gone.

-- Charles Bukowski

San Pedro CA

LIT NOTES////////////////////////////////////

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